

Consultant 19

30 January 2014

Dear Mr Witcomb

As a consultant rheumatologist, I would like to take this opportunity to describe how HCA ownership has enabled the development of a world-renowned lupus practice at the London Bridge Hospital, and how divestment may damage this unit. I cannot comment on other private providers, because I choose to practice solely at the London Bridge Hospital, believing it to be the location best suited to supporting my practice.

The London Lupus Centre at the London Bridge Hospital was Europe's first private dedicated lupus centre, and is unique in the quality of care offered to lupus patients. As a result, it attracts patients from across the globe, many of whom come for second or third opinions. Without the support of HCA, the development of this centre would not have been possible. Investment has provided a state of the art diagnostic facility and highly trained, specialised medical support staff. The centre also includes a research facility, ensuring that developments continue to be made in the lupus field, and supports two charities supporting 3 doctors at St Thomas' hospital. HCA's support in the establishment of the London Lupus Centre is a prime example of how HCA is a leading innovator in the private healthcare space.

Unfortunately, this leading centre is unlikely to continue to exist in its current form should the sale of the London Bridge Hospital go ahead. I firmly believe that divestment will put our patients' health at risk.